



Well Deserved

A VA Newsletter for Women Veterans

Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center • October 2010 • Issue No. 2

LOCAL EVENTS CALENDAR

Oct 16th, 2010, Making Strides
Against Breast Cancer,
Celebration Plaza in White
River State Park

Nov. 6th, 2010, 10:00 a.m. to
3:00 p.m., Minority Veterans
Town Hall Meeting, call 317-
988-1606 for more information

For more information, or to
subscribe to this newsletter,
please call 317-988-4642 or
email Leigh.Frye@va.gov
Published October 2010



Indianapolis Vet Center

The Indianapolis Vet Center has moved to its new location at 8330 Naab Road, #103, Indianapolis, IN 46260. Vet Centers are in community based sites and there are additional Indiana locations in Evansville, Merrillville, and Fort Wayne. All military veterans are eligible to receive services, treatment, and care at Vet Centers.

The Indianapolis Vet Center is staffed with 80% veterans, including women veterans on most teams, and treats over 4,000 veterans annually. The Vet Center provides free services that are private and confidential. They provide individual, group, and family therapy, as well as assistance with bereavement, claims, readjustment/PTSD assessments, and employment services.

They also provide sensitive and specialized therapy for Military Sexual Trauma (MST) survivors. It is believed that 8-20% of female veterans have experienced MST and that many service members are discharged without awareness of eligibility for treatment at VA Medical Centers or Vet Centers. The Vet Center has a therapist who is specially trained to assess and provide therapy for MST.

If you would like more information about what the Vet Center has to offer or to find out information about other Vet Center locations, please call 317-988-1600. For additional information on MST, contact the MST Coordinator, Laura Malone, at 317-988-3469.

★ Spotlight on a Veteran



MEET ELIZABETH AND THERESA O'DOHERTY

Sisters and OEF/OIF Veterans Elizabeth O'Doherty and Theresa O'Doherty, both of Acton, Mass., credit their decisions to become nurse practitioners in part on their time spent in Iraq. "I want to help people heal, something I could not do in Iraq," said Elizabeth, who was deployed with the Third Infantry Division January through August 2003. Elizabeth, who has received "outstanding" care at both the Bedford and Boston VA facilities, hopes to work in the VA system caring for Veterans—her "favorite population." Theresa, who was deployed with the Army Reserves in Iraq February 2004 through January 2005, works as a family nurse practitioner. The sisters are both active in the Disabled American Veterans local Chapter 28 and travel together speaking about their experiences in Iraq in the hopes of helping other women Veterans. They are working on a book about their service in Iraq.



Patricia M. Hayes, Ph.D.

Chief Consultant
Women Veterans Health
Strategic Health Care Group
VA Central Office (VACO)
Washington, D.C.

CHIEF CONSULTANT'S CORNER

It is easy to become consumed with the daily work of improving access and quality of services for women Veterans. It is a significant effort, and as Secretary Shinseki has said, "Time is not on our side. The surge in women Veterans has begun and will continue." At VA Central Office and in the field, we are working tirelessly on numerous fronts: educating providers, improving safety and security and revising standards of care for women Veterans. What we must not forget amid this critical work is how important it is to share what we're doing with women Veterans. Part of our mission is to bring women Veterans who need VA services to the VA. Facilities are reaching out to women Veterans locally. Some are holding forums, while others are hosting "showers" for women Veterans to highlight reproductive services. Nationally, VA hosted a forum for women Veterans and their advocates in July. The event received national press attention, which helped spread the word of our accomplishments to our most important audience—women Veterans.

Sharing Our Progress with Women Veterans



WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH CARE

The Women Veterans Health Strategic Health Care Group's mission to provide the highest quality health care to women Veterans includes the goal of bringing more women into the VA system. While working hard to improve services, VA facilities across the nation have also been reaching out to women Veterans in their communities to let them know about enhancements as they are made, encouraging women Veterans to get the care they deserve from VA.

- ★ VA's Office of Research and Development and Women Veterans Health sponsored the second Women's Health Services Research Conference in **Arlington, Va.**—five years after the first VA conference for women's health. Investigators interested in research on women Veterans and women in the military came from across the country to set the agenda for VA women's health research. Discussions focused on results of recent research and on topics for new research studies. Preliminary results of the national survey of women Veterans were also presented. VA Office of Research and Development web site, www.research.va.gov, July 2010.
- ★ VA hosted a Forum on Women Veterans at the Women's Memorial at Arlington Cemetery in **Arlington, Va.**, to spotlight enhancements in VA care and services for women Veterans. Secretary Shinseki joined VA experts in health care, benefits and homelessness to discuss how VA is improving access, enhancing services and evolving to meet the needs of a burgeoning population of women Veterans. The forum was attended by women Veterans, Veteran Services Organizations and women Veteran advocates. Presentations and forum materials are available at <http://www1.va.gov/womenvet/>. *The Washington Post*, www.washingtonpost.com, July 29, 2010.
- ★ The North Chicago Veterans Affairs Medical Center, in **Chicago, Ill.**, held a baby shower for women Veterans to highlight the medical services available for women Veterans at the facility. The facility's Women's Wellness Clinic offers prenatal care, contraception counseling, infertility work-ups, menopause management and bone mineral density testing, among other services. *Chicago Tribune*, www.chicagotribune.com, July 23, 2010.

- ★ The New Mexico Department of Veterans' Services presented the Four Corners Women Veterans' Conference in **Farmington, N.M.**, to inform women Veterans and their advocates of issues affecting women Veterans and of services and benefits available to them. Discussions focused on the increase in military sexual trauma and post traumatic stress disorder among women Veterans and the availability of higher education benefits through the Post-9/11 GI Bill. *KRQE*, www.krqe.com, July 23, 2010.
- ★ The G.V. Sonny Montgomery VA Medical Center in **Jackson, Va.**, hosted a July forum on women Veterans to discuss eligibility, post-deployment health services and vet center benefits. The forum was part of the facility's efforts to increase patient education and outreach efforts geared toward women Veterans. The medical center recently made renovations to the facility, including increasing the number of private rooms in clinic areas for interviewing women Veterans. *The Clarion Ledger*, www.clarionledger.com, July 22, 2010.
- ★ The latest video highlighting VA's efforts to improve health care for women Veterans debuted at the Forum for Women Veterans in July. Through a collection of interviews with women Veterans in facilities around the country, *You Served, You Deserve* documents the far-reaching changes under way across the VA system. View the video at <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/multimedia/womenshealth/VA-final.aspx>.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Oct. TBD

Provider Audio Conference

Oct., Nov., Dec.

WVPM Regional Meetings

Ongoing

VA Study on Vietnam-era Women Veterans

To participate, call
1-888-831-3325

www.research.va.gov/programs/csp



Who Has Time For The Flu? VA Offers Flu Shots to Women Veterans

All women Veterans, especially those who are pregnant or take care of young children or the elderly, should get a flu shot to prevent seasonal and H1N1 flu. This year, one shot protects against both seasonal and H1N1 flu and, as always, is safe for pregnant women during any trimester. Contact your health care provider at your local VA about getting your flu shot. For more information and guidance on flu prevention, visit www.publichealth.va.gov/flu.

MEET VACO WOMEN'S HEALTH STAFF

Chief Consultant:
Patricia M. Hayes, Ph.D.

Deputy Chief Consultant and
Director of Comprehensive Health:
Laura Herrera, MD, MPH

Director of Reproductive Health:
Laurie Zephyrin, MD, MPH, MBA

Director of Women's Health Education:
Laure Veet, MD

Deputy Director of
Comprehensive Health:
Stacy Garrett-Ray, MD, MPH, MBA

Deputy Field Directors:
Connie LaRosa, RN, MSA
Meri Mallard, RN, MSA
MaryAnn Woodward-Smith, RN,
MSN, PMHCS, BC

www.publichealth.va.gov/womenshealth

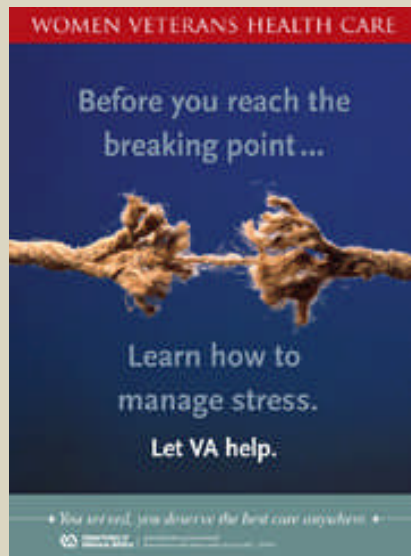
WOMEN VETERANS HEALTH OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS

A national Women Veterans Program Manager (WVPM) Communications Group gathers monthly to focus on communications and outreach to women Veterans. The monthly health outreach materials they develop and distribute to WVPMs nationwide are a critical component of their efforts to connect with women Veterans. The posters (examples of which are shown below) are typically supplemented with wallet cards, table tents, or flyers with health tips as well as recommendations for activities WVPMs can plan for women Veterans. Overall, the goal is to let women Veterans know VA can help them.



Pain

Veterans, particularly of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, have a significant chance of experiencing pain that interferes with daily activities and negatively affects quality of life, according to data collected by the Veterans Health Administration. In July, WVPMs encouraged women Veterans to ask their VA providers about treatment options for pain.



Stress

In September, WVPMs raised awareness of stress and how it can negatively affect your mental and physical health if not dealt with properly. VA health offers multiple, complementary approaches—counseling, exercise, lifestyle adjustments, medication—to counter the effects of debilitating stress.



Diabetes

Recent studies show that the Veterans Health Administration excels in diabetes care compared with other health care organizations—scoring 13 percent higher than the national sample. In September, the WVPM outreach campaign focused on diabetes and ways to prevent it and manage it with help from the VA.